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### THE LUXURY OF SOLITUDE.

Ah! wretched and too solitary he,  
Who loves not his own company!—COWLEY.

Five o'clock or thereabouts on a winter's evening; twilight has given place to darkness, save for the farewell streak of light in the western sky. Outside—sharp, hard frost, white, silent snow—possibly rain—for it is useless to attempt to ignore this frequent phase of our winter. Within—a small, snug room—a bachelor's den, yet neat. For the last half-hour the cheerful firelight has sufficed the occupant, who has come in for the night, settled himself in his slippers, and well-nigh dispersed the chill that had gathered upon him out of doors; now he is looking forward with pleasure to completing the thaw with tea. A dog—more than one, perhaps—lies stretched on the hearth, and as he dozes the flicker of the fire falls ever and anon on soft, shining, brown eyes. There is plainly visible a 'love for everything that is old;' in the old-fashioned grate, the horseshoe-backed Garrick chair, and the one or two plain oak tables, coverless and time-stained.

The books display a broader taste. Old volumes there are, and new editions of old works; but present too are the books of yesterday and to-day.

And when the 'between lights' has been enjoyed to the full, and the cup of tea is brought in by the quiet, methodical factotum, who is housekeeper, cook, and parlour-maid in one, the books are eyed with loving glance. One is, perhaps, selected to accompany the meal; something light—maybe a review or newspaper, that can be dipped into at intervals. For there is true leisure here: no need to make the most of every moment for fear of interruptions; there will be none within the abode of which we speak, nor from without if its situation be chosen with due care; and the lonely bookworm may look forward to an evening with his favourites without fear of disturbance.

Or it is an autumn day: the sun shines from

a cloudless sky, but with heat tempered by the haze. In the quiet garden or orchard there is no sound more distracting than the hum of insects or the low, contented crooning of a hen; now and again the thud of a falling apple, and ever the soft sweet notes of a robin. Or the seashore at twilight, when one listens spellbound and tries to catch the meaning of the wave-voices. Or it is the great silence of a lonely hillside.

To a lover of the vast solitariness of the open air how the gentlest voice would jar on the ear; with what fatal precision the best of companions fails to say the right thing; or rather—for the 'right thing' is to listen and be silent—fails to hold his peace. Just when nature is wrapping us in the dreamy semi-consciousness of another life, comes the intruding voice, the sickening triviality, and the spell is broken.

'What a frightfully selfish picture you are taking the trouble to sketch,' says some one. My gentle reader, not so. It is true, no doubt, as a general axiom, that it is not good for man to be alone, as it is also true that the proper study of mankind is man; but there always have been, and always will be, those for whom it is good to be alone and who do well to decline the study of their fellow-men. And to force these into society benefits neither it nor them. In the case of such it is unquestionably to the advantage of all that they be permitted to withdraw themselves into that seclusion for which their souls long.

How intense that longing sometimes is can be known to none who are not under its sway. Shall I be considered un gallant if I say that women are as a rule less able to appreciate the pleasures of silence and solitude than men? If a nagging woman gives you no peace, a cheerful one too often gives you less—to use a palpable Hibernicism. Both classes can, alas, furnish examples of Jonson's 'Madam with the everlasting voice.' Oh, those cheerful women who seem physically unable to allow a moment to pass without a remark about something—or nothing! Who does not know one? The woman who is

described by admiring female friends as 'so active and cheerful.' She comments on the weather fifty times a day. If she takes a book in her hand—a thing she does but rarely—she begins a running fire of conversation anent it, till the unfortunate volume is again laid—unread—to rest. She comments on the dust on the cover, or the signs of wear on the edges; on the title-page illustration, and the annoyance of the leaves being uncut; on the opening sentence and the style of the first chapter; till the weary listener who had hoped for some brief respite when he saw the volume taken in hand, realises that there are people to whom books are but aids to conversation.

But this tirade is against but a small proportion of the sex, and is all I have to urge against it. The most persistently talkative woman does not fasten on a man in the street; this is a line of conduct appropriated by the male bore. We all know him: the man with whom we have more or less acquaintance and not two ideas in common; and who, nevertheless, persists in being very fond of us. We know the deadly and determined smile with which he approaches; the horrible manner in which he at once throws aside all the plans that he may have entertained before, in an evil moment, he espied us; and the helplessness with which we receive the dread announcement that he has nothing to do for an hour or two, and will go wherever we are going. And for his attacks the wretch generally selects times—few and far between—when we are not in a position to allege urgent business as an excuse for shaking him off, but those leisure hours when we fondly imagined that we were free to follow our own devices for a time and had planned a solitary saunter.

And we are shy and nervous—we lonely ones—slow at shift and expedient; and we fail to invent on the spur of the moment a tale that will 'wash.' Hating 'scenes,' we shrink from the desperate step of quarrelling with our incubus and so shaking him off once for all. So though we sigh inwardly, we smile with our lips and are led to sacrifice without a protest. And we think we understand what Horace Walpole meant when he exclaimed: 'Oh, my dear sir, don't you find that nine parts in ten of the world are of no use but to make you wish yourself with that tenth part?'

Extremes meet. In two widely different places may we hope to find rest from the torment of society: London and the heart of the country. Unless we are very notable persons indeed—and few of us are—we can securely lose ourselves in the former. We can safely loiter down Piccadilly, and stand in the most exposed positions before print and book shops, without fearing that the throng will present us with too familiar faces. We can perambulate the City with an equal mind: for even though we possess friends there, they will be far too busy to spend time on idlers like ourselves, and we shall be passed, as we loved to be passed, with a wag of the head. Ah, there is much to be said after all for dirty, noisy London. 'A crowd is not company'—that company which we would fain avoid; 'and faces are

but a gallery of pictures'—pictures interesting even to the recluse.

But more fitting is the silent solitude of the country: the absolute loneliness to be found in a cottage on a byroad of the Welsh borders, or a retreat in the mountains of Mid-Wales itself. The long, silent summer days passed among the hills with a sandwich and a book: the winter evenings with a reading-lamp before the open hearth. Happy perhaps in a double degree is the 'handy man' who can transact the domestic business of his house with no more assistance than that rendered by a neighbour for a daily hour; he indeed will know the luxury of solitude to its full extent. But we are not all so deft of finger, and must have a servant within call to help us through life. In such a case prudence—if not the pocket—will limit the assistance thus invoked to one individual; few women talk to themselves, and it will generally be found possible to evade the too persistent attempts at conversation made by an elderly housekeeper.

From this haven of seclusion one may nevertheless be very good friends with the world. Many men who shun conversation are excellent correspondents; letter-writing possesses the advantages of talking without the drawbacks. One sits down to write to a friend when in the mood: the flow of spirits is not discouraged by his inattention, or interrupted by any undue eagerness on his part to say his say. Letter-reading is in the same measure preferable to listening to audible words. The epistle is conned at breakfast, bit by bit, at our ease. We approve, smile at, or totally dissent from its sentiments and opinions without the embarrassment of the writer's observation. We even lay it aside altogether, or if not in conversational humour, delay to break the seal till so inclined. Metaphorically speaking, that is; for alas! the world is grown too chary of its time to indulge in the careful and deliberate operations of our grandparents, and the neatly-moulded wax with the heraldic or fanciful device has given place to the finger-marks and creases of the envelope flap.

I pre-suppose and advise some amount of correspondence even to the most confirmed recluse, not only for its own sake, but because it will be expedient to maintain a choice circle of friends for visiting purposes. All pleasures cloy, even the pleasure of living alone, and the solitary one will need occasionally to refresh his distaste for society; though it will be wise to refrain from announcing this as his purpose when accepting an invitation. With the true hermit a stay of a few days or at most a fortnight should suffice to send him back to his cell bursting with self-gratulation.

A chilly evening in early autumn reminds me that among those delights enjoyed to the full only when alone, a fire ranks high. That in the light of which my tea-table gleams white this evening is a peculiarly delightful one. Built carefully in the form of a somewhat flattened pyramid, the body of the pile is crowned at the apex by a few gently flapping flames, the sound of which imparts just enough of cheerfulness and no more. It is neither sulky nor aggressive, but has found the happy medium not always found of fires.

Such a fire as this deserves better of us than

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to have its genial voice drowned in the chatter of company. Worthy of the closest attention and appreciation is its every tone; from start to finish, to use sporting parlance, the many phases of a good fire are all delightful. The low hiss of the damper sticks when first lighted; the sharp explosive crackle of those better seasoned; the 'flap' of the little tongues of flame as they leap tentatively among the black coal nobs; up to the loud exultant roar when the whole mass becomes involved and the conquering blaze leaps in a body towards the dark hollow of the chimney. Then later come the pleasures of judicious replenishment, and finally the pensive watching of the expiring embers; what exquisite satisfaction is here!

I cannot speak of the lonely life from the standpoint of the thorough bookworm, the man who can pore over a favourite volume for days at a time, with but brief intervals for sleeping and eating, and yet need no diversion. After a spell of reading I must spend some hours—days even—in a more active world than that of letters: walking or rowing, gardening or some handiwork; perhaps a day idling in the town among varied faces and busy men. But I enjoy meanwhile the certainty that I shall presently return with a zest all the keener to the silent voices. There are many modes of spending the intervals between study and study, volume and volume. For my own part I have tried—indeed still try—them all; but few are more satisfactory than a little dilettantism in a garden.

Gardening is a taste which is, I fancy, born with the few; in the many it springs up with advancing years. However this may be, there are few occupations that seem to alternate so well with the study of books or a modest wielding of the pen than gardening. One cannot well define or explain the peculiar manner in which the two employments react upon each other, but the fact remains. Cowper's prayer for 'Books, a garden, and perhaps my pen,' has had many an echo.

In living alone, as in most things, it is the first step that counts. To the friends with whom one lives or with whom one has had constant intercourse for years, it will probably seem a hard thing, a deliberate cruelty, to propose to sever, for no apparent cause, ties of long standing; to leave the house or the neighbourhood where nothing but kindness has been experienced, and against which the only complaint to be made is that one cannot be alone. Because none but the recluse himself can understand the insatiable desire for utter solitude by which he is possessed. To others it is a hard saying.

There is, too, the lurking dread that after all we may be making a mistake; that the much-coveted solitude may contain some element for which we have not bargained, and which may prove powerful enough to drive us back to the society—and the laughter—of our friends. The genuine Diogenes, however, usually knows what he is about when he makes arrangements for taking possession of his tub; it is the man who *sometimes* thinks that he should like to live alone, or who is in the midst of too dense a crowd of friends, who is in danger of coming to grief in this way. It is so difficult for some of us to hit the happy medium of society. 'All men are bores except when we want them,' says the genial 'Autocrat.'

Whether detestation of the boredom is strong enough to warrant permanent retirement from its vicinity; or whether, once absent, we might—troubling thought!—pine even for those very bores, is a point to weigh well.

## A TSAR'S GRATITUDE.

### CHAPTER XXV.

A RUSSIAN *kabak*, or drinking-shop, is an extremely lively place at about eight o'clock in the evening. The accommodation generally consists of one large room set about with little tables, each one of which is crowded by a group of quiet tea-drinkers or of rowdy vodka-consumers, as the case may be. There are sometimes a few private rooms for the use of favoured or superior guests. Just such a *kabak* was that situated at the extreme end of the 'Fourth Line' on Basil Island. This large island, which forms a considerable portion of the city of St Petersburg, is subdivided into some twenty or more long streets, which are called 'Lines,' and go by numbers instead of names, and each of which is itself divided across in three places, the cross-streets being known as 'prospects,' and distinguished as the great, middle, and small. It was at the far end, or the small 'prospect' of the 'Fourth Line' that the *kabak* which provided Karaool and his friends with one of their secret committee-rooms was situated.

The room was upstairs, and looked out upon the back premises of the establishment, close to the Nefka, or Little Neva, which—one of the branches of the greater Neva—embraces one side of the island, while the parent stream completes the circle on the other side.

When Karaool arrived upon the scene the large room was full of noisy revellers, among whom the master of the establishment did his best to keep some semblance of order, and worked marvellously hard in his endeavours to execute all the orders showered upon him by the occupants of the numerous small tables, amongst which he dodged and darted with the activity of an ant among the grass-blades. Old Karaool exchanged glances with the host; and the latter, as soon as he was able to come alongside, spoke to the old watchmaker.

'No. 11 is ready for you,' he said. 'How many do I admit?'

'Four,' said Karaool.

'And the word?'

'Smirnot.'

The host nodded his head and flitted away to serve some insistent customer with tea or vodka. Karaool himself repaired to the room upstairs which was known as Committee-room 11. Here he was joined presently by the four, all of whom gave the word of the day to the landlord and were duly admitted.

When tea had been brought by the host a general conversation began, and to any who had chanced to overhear the talk of these five worthies it might never have occurred that they had come to discuss, and were actually discussing, a matter of terrible and weighty import. The allusions to the subject in hand were so hidden and so skilfully intermingled with a mass of irrelevant conversation that the sharpest listeners could scarcely have detected anything to cause suspicion,

unless they had been previously acquainted both with the methods of Karaool and his friends, and with the particular affair to which their occasional mysterious allusions referred.

Karaool had called this meeting for a double purpose. It had already been decided, at a previous assembly of the inner circle, that a certain projected attack upon the head of the realm should not be much longer delayed. It was now to be decided when and where this precious project was to be carried into execution, and by whom the attempt should be made. Those only who were considered the more dangerous members of the organisation were to be selected for this undesirable duty, and these were mentioned only by their numbers, not by name. Such an enterprise as this that was now in contemplation was, in the nature of it, of the most perilous ; and to be selected by Karaool for a share in the executive department was tantamount to an intimation that if the person selected happened to entertain an insuperable objection to the responsible work apportioned to him, the alternative was one of Karaool's green tickets, which was another way of spelling 'removal.'

Accordingly, among much general talk as to the theatre, the opera, and kindred subjects, it was soon made clear to the colleagues of Karaool that the president had decided, subject to their confirmation, that the work to be done should be carried out at an approaching operatic performance at the Grand Theatre, when a certain great Italian star was to make her *rentre* to St Petersburg, and when the Emperor was certain to be present. Three names, or rather numbers, were proposed as 'executives,' each to occupy a selected position, in the theatre, the vestibule, and the corridor respectively. Two of those thus honoured were offenders in one way or another against 'the brotherhood'—men who by their rashness of disposition, or in consequence of suspected weakness or threatened treachery, were considered dangerous to the community. Had Colya Smirnof been alive he would undoubtedly have furnished a fourth. The third was to be Doonya Rachmatof, whose late adventure with the police had proved that she was a marked woman in the eyes of the authorities, and therefore 'impossible.'

But a question arose as to the whereabouts of Doonya. She might at this very moment be in the hands of the police, in which case it was highly probable that those gentry would soon make themselves masters of certain information—of all, indeed, with which Doonya could furnish them, for she was not of the kind to withhold revelations under pressure such as they would be likely to put upon her. Luckily, said Karaool, Doonya knew neither the names nor addresses of those members who formed the inner circle ; neither was she acquainted with the addresses of the rooms used by himself and his colleagues for their very select meetings ; such gatherings, for instance, as the present agreeable little tea-party. Nevertheless it would be unadvisable to make any move until it should be known what had become of the missing girl. There was plenty of time to look about one and feel one's way a bit before the gala performance at the Grand Theatre, which was still at least a fortnight distant. If Doonya gave no sign during the next day or two, it would be easy enough to find this man Philipof,

who had disappeared from Kirilof's with her, after rescuing her from the police, and to learn from him where he had concealed the girl, supposing that she were still at large ; and if not, anything else he might have to tell about her capture.

'And what if he too were in the hands of the bloodhounds?' asked some one.

'That would not matter to us,' said Karaool, 'except in so far as to show that Doonya is taken, and that therefore we must bear in mind exactly what she knows and can reveal, and warn those whom she may implicate. As for the theatre affair, it must proceed without Doonya if she is no longer with us ; but if she is at large she must be found, and her commission given to her—with, of course, the ticket. She is the most impossible of all from this time, and she shall have the first position—under the imperial box.'

This much being decided, it only remained to wait a day or two for news from Doonya. If none should arrive Philipof must be found and interrogated. Meanwhile there must be no general meetings ; the committee-rooms known to Doonya must be left alone ; Kirilof must be warned and instructed—for Kirilof was the Mercury of the brotherhood, and to him it would fall to hunt up Philipof and squeeze his information out of him.

Accordingly Philipof, standing upon the wharf at Pod-Nefsky, and busy superintending the loading of one of the craft committed to his charge, was surprised one evening, at dusk, on turning suddenly round, to see standing close behind him a man whose face he seemed to know, who begged the favour of a word with him.

Philipof was busy, and disinclined for conversation, but acquiesced nevertheless, remarking shortly that he seemed to remember the face, but could not recall the name of his visitor.

'The doctor,' explained the other. 'I attended Nicholas Smirnof at your request—you will remember—he was wounded by the police, from whom you rescued a lady—Doonya Rachmatof.'

Philipof remembered him now.

'Well,' he said, 'your patient died, I believe, and there is an end of the matter so far as I am concerned. Smirnof was not exactly a *persona grata* to me, you will understand ; in fact, I am not in the least interested in him, and I am, besides, extremely busy.'

'I don't think you are aware of the great service poor Smirnof rendered to you at dying,' said Kirilof ; 'he sent to the Tsar an elaborate vindication and justification of yourself with regard to a certain affair of four or five years ago.'

Philipof flushed a little, and for a moment his heart beat rapidly. Had this man any good news for him? Nay, after all, how could he know the result of Smirnof's amiable efforts? Philipof was no longer sanguine as to the rising of his luck-star ; it had set for ever, he knew, so far as imperial favour and justice were concerned.

'Oh,' he said, with a laugh, 'how very good of him! An *amende honorable*, I suppose he considered it, for five years of hard lying to my ruin and effacement! Now I ask you, Mr Doctor, as a sensible man, why should the Tsar believe this man's tale, supposing that he ever receives the precious document, which is the most unlikely thing in all the world? He will simply conclude that Smirnof and I were accomplices, and accused one another to save our necks, and that when one

did he did what he could for the other fellow because he himself could no longer be punished. No, no, Mr Doctor; thanks for your trouble in coming to tell me, but I am no longer a candidate for imperial favour.'

'That's as may be,' said Kirilof; 'but I came, not to tell you of Smirnof's efforts on your behalf—in which he was perfectly whole-hearted, nevertheless—but to ask you for news of his companion, whom you rescued and undertook to conceal. I have an important communication for her.'

Philipof froze up at once.

'If that is it,' he said, 'I fear I cannot oblige you.'

'But we are her friends. My message to her is the most important possible; it is absolutely necessary for me to know what has become of her. If she is in the hands of the police, I have means of rescuing her.'

'She is not in the hands of the police.'

'That at least is satisfactory,' said Kirilof quite sincerely. 'But as to her whereabouts?'

'Ah!' said Philipof, smiling, 'that is my secret and hers, and shall be revealed neither to police nor to—other dangerous bodies.'

'Come, come! you must know it would be impossible, even if desirable, to conceal her from us; it will save you time and trouble to let me know where to find her without further argument,' said Kirilof, angered.

'I am not anxious to save myself either in time or trouble, seeing that I have undertaken to protect this lady,' observed Philipof quietly. 'You may inform those who sent you that I know what I know, and that I intend no one else to share my knowledge. You may add that if I find myself spied upon, whether at home or here, or dogged in the streets, I shall know how to take care of myself. The water is pretty deep about here, and rather dirty—not a nice place to be chucked into—and a very strong current.'

'Sir, you are neither very wise nor very polite,' said Kirilof. 'I will only say that those who sent me spare no pains to find out that which they desire to know. I am sorry that you are unwilling to save us trouble; but your precautions will prove useless; you will find them so.'

With these words Kirilof bowed coldly and withdrew, leaving Philipof more determined than ever to be on his guard when the barge No. 15 returned with its precious freight.

#### 'DISTINCTION' NAMES.

In some weaving and most fishing villages, when asking for any one, you frequently receive the reply, 'What is his distinction?' When several people have the same name, it is necessary to give each of them another in addition to that on his birth certificate. This is called his 'distinction.'

In the fishing town of B—there are seven or eight names which the original inhabitants share among them. As there is a population of more than four thousand, the same name occurs with confusing frequency. For instance, every year some fifteen Thomsens, eight Walkers, seven Fosters, six Deases, five Robertsons, four Logies are baptised in one of the churches. Or, looking at it from another point of view, five James

Thomsens can stand at their own house-ends and chat with one another, while a sixth can throw in an occasional word out of the window. Or from a third, recently, when calling a minister, seventy-nine Thomsens, thirty-eight Deases, thirty-three Logies, twenty-seven Walkers, twenty-six Taylors, twenty-six Robertsons, twenty-six Fosters, and fifteen Warrenders signed the call. As many more, perhaps, bearing the same names, did not; but, needless to say, that minister does not know who did or did not sign it.

There being few surnames, one might have expected to find a great variety of Christian names. On the contrary there is not. As fishermen, we are partial to the names of the disciples, especially to John, Peter, James, Andrew, and Thomas. We also follow the good old custom of naming son after sire, and in this way multiply the same name. In one respect, however, our practice differs from that of tradespeople and the country folk. Whether the first born be a son or a daughter, the father has the 'right' to the name. That is, if a son, he is named after the paternal grandfather; if a daughter, after the paternal grandmother, and not, as in most places, after her maternal. This custom is sacred. Even Alec Deas, whose father disapproved of his marriage, observed it.

Having only a limited number of Christian names and surnames, the difficulty of distinguishing man from man is very perplexing. In other villages, where the difficulty occurs, it is customary to distinguish a man by the name of the street in which he lives. In B— we have no streets. Our houses seem to have been washed up by the tide, and left clinging to the rocks like limpets. Not long ago an attempt was made to name and number the so-called streets and houses, but with no success. At least Robert Thomson, who got three tax-papers handed in to him instead of one, does not think so. How then do we distinguish one another?

In the first place, a skipper may be known by the name of his boat, as a farmer is by the name of his farm. This used to be a more general practice. It is said to have fallen out of use, because people felt it unlucky to continue to call a man or his sons by the name of a boat which had been wrecked or lost. Still, even yet the boat's name is used as a distinction. Two principles seem to govern their usage. The name must come readily to the tongue. We never address the owner of the *Star of Hope* by that name. *Emperor* is the common distinction of one well-known skipper. Or, if a boat has been very successful, the likelihood is the owner will be known by its name.

But every skipper has another distinction—the name of his wife. This is the one used for postal purposes. Once the postmaster refused to deliver telegram addressed to a man by his boat's name, on the ground that it was not registered. He would not have refused to de-

liver it addressed Peter Taylor Robertson. The uninitiated would naturally think this man's name was Peter Robertson, and that Taylor was a 'second handle.' Now, although every man in the place has two surnames, we do not believe in 'second handles.' Every self-respecting native drops his distinction when he goes to a strange place. The name of the above is not Peter Robertson, but Peter Taylor, and Robertson is his wife's surname, which he adds to his own as his distinction. This is necessary, because there are four Peter Taylors, who also take their wives' surnames. The correct way to write these names is Peter Taylor (Robertson), Peter Taylor (Thomson), but the brackets are seldom put in. The first and most general rule, then, is for the husband to take the wife's surname as his distinction.

But this would not always be sufficient. It frequently happens that the distinction is already in use. For example, when James Foster married Katie Logie, there was already a James Foster (Logie) in the village, and he was forced to find another distinction. He accordingly called himself James Foster (Katie). That is, if the surname is in use, the husband assumes the Christian name of his wife. Thus we have John Thomson (Helen) and John Thomson (Isabel).

It not unfrequently happens that both the surname and Christian name of his wife are in use; then the newly married man must find another suitable distinction. Two plans are open. He may take both the names or retain his mother's. The former plan is clumsy, and leads to confusion. Still, either through fondness of their wives or from necessity, some adopt it, and several names run in this form, Andrew Walker (Euphemia Deas). The mother's name is a very handy one. It is well known through being used by the father, and all children get it. In the day-school, however, instead of calling a child, say, Maggie Robertson (Warrender), the plan is sometimes adopted of saying, Maggie Robertson (B) or Maggie Robertson (C). As a general rule, the children take the mother's name as a distinction just as the husband does. And when they marry, if the name of their wife is in use, they simply retain it.

These are the general principles which govern the formation of distinction names, but there are other exceptional methods. For instance, it happens here as elsewhere that the gray mare is the better horse. In other places it is usual to speak of a henpecked husband as Mrs Nairn's husband or Mrs Spite's man. Here we have a shorter way. We call him Kirstie's Alec or Lizzie's Walter, as the case may be.

From these remarks it will be felt that an uncommon name is invaluable and that there is something in it. And an incomer sometimes wonders why uncommon names are not given to more of the children. Once a rash husband yielded to an ambitious wife and named their fifth son after the Prince of Wales. For ever afterwards the father himself was named Albert, and the incident held up to scorn in the paragraph of the local paper devoted to 'What the people are saying.' Occasionally a new name does slip in naturally. For instance, when a new minister comes it is usual, as in other places, for the first boy baptised by him to receive his name. A

hundred years ago a boy was thus named after David Telford. His surname was an uncommon one, and it has become a common Christian name among the descendants of the boy. We have Telford Thomsens, Taylors, and Robertsons. Indeed the name has become too common, and those who bear it need an additional one like the rest of us.

The minister, with one exception, is the only man who has given a distinction to any family. For the father's name is never used in this way. The exception referred to is that of a man whose great-grandchildren use his Christian name. The case is most unusual. You sometimes hear a man called Bernard's James's Walter. That is Walter Thomson, son of James, son of Bernard. John Thomson is supposed to be our commonest name, and hence we are with reason called John Tamson's bairns. Once when speaking to an old man about a certain John Thomson, the writer could not make him understand. At last he brought a smile of recognition to his face by saying, Bernard's James's Walter's John Thomson. He knew that at once; but most people would need to be brought up in aristocratic circles to remember it.

There are still other distinctions in every-day use, although not used in documents or on letters. If a man or a woman has any striking feature, physical or other kind, very frequently we refer to them by it. We have 'Long John' and 'Little Rob,' 'Black James' and 'Fair James.' 'English Tom' is the name of a man who stayed in England for some years. These distinctions would not be used in conversation with a comparative stranger, or if used would need to be interpreted. The following conversation will show them in actual use. 'What crew do you go with, John?' 'Long John.' 'Is that John Thomson (Logie)?" 'Yes, we just ca' him that.' 'Who else?' 'Bell's Tam; you'll maybe ken him by Tammas Warrender (Isabel).' 'And the fourth?' 'Teethy's Rob; ye ken wha I mean?'

Obviously it is no easy matter to remember the names of the people of B——. Nativity or a long residence and a good memory alone enable one to be at home with them. This a strange postman once found out. For some reason or other, the old residenter was superseded by this new-comer. We resented the slight thrown upon the village. One week convinced the man himself that it was impossible for a stranger to deliver the letters. On Monday morning he could not arrange his bundle. The so-called streets were not named, nor were the houses numbered. He began by inquiring from door to door, but could not get an owner for a letter. For he invariably used the distinction instead of the surname. At length he discovered his mistake; when he asked for Mrs James Euphemia instead of Mrs James Thomson (Euphemia), Mrs Warrender (Janet) took pity upon the 'pair craittur' and explained the addresses to him. The explanation did not enlighten him much, for we were not otherwise disposed to help him. At length in despair he bought a 'pund o' sweeties' and went down to the beach. He induced the boys and girls with the promise of the 'sweeties' to take the letters to their mothers. But he learned little by watching them as they dived out and in through the closes and courts, like rabbits in a warren. By

the same means he delivered the letters for three days and then asked to be removed. We thus scored against the authorities and our old postman was restored to his place.

## CHRISTOPHER COLBECK'S HEAD.

## CHAPTER II.—CONCLUSION.

THE sale at Colbeck Villa had been in progress for more than an hour when John Fernley walked slowly up the garden path. He was a little old man, wearing a shabby greatcoat trimmed with fur, and he carried a strong walking-stick to aid his steps. Some of those who noticed him as he entered the grounds wondered what had brought him; others whispered of an old man's curiosity, and one or two of the more charitable judged that he intended to secure some cheap memento of his long friendship with the deceased.

He passed in, glancing vacantly at the lawn, strewn with odds and ends of furniture, and the now curtainless windows looking so cheerless and dark. Some one directed him to the dining-room, where the sale was then proceeding; but just as he reached it a stream of people came out, and he heard the strident voice of the auctioneer:

'The study next, ladies and gentlemen, the study next. First door on the left.'

Taking advantage of his freedom from the crush, John Fernley turned to the door on the left, and entered the study with the first of the stream. There he found a chair in a convenient corner, and sat down to watch the sale.

He knew the room well enough. Every article was ticketed and numbered, 'By Order of the Executors,' as the placards had said, but they were all familiar. There was the heavy oak table, with its raised desk: he had sat on one side of that on a certain night two years ago, when he had asked Christopher Colbeck to assist him out of the mire of a foolish speculation by advancing him eight hundred pounds on the security of his house and grounds. That was the desk which, on the next night, had received his cherished title-deeds: the flat-topped desk, still bearing as ornament that queer little bronze and that plain birch paper-rack. He remembered those things so well!

People settled down about him, the usual assembly of brokers, private buyers, and curious neighbours. The auctioneer took his place at the table, and the sale began. John Fernley did not notice.

It was in this room that he had paid his interest, twice, for he had never cared to go down to the office, where that deep-looking young Heigham smiled and fawned upon his uncle's clients. It was here, too, that he had brought his excuses for not paying it the third time, and Christopher, for old times' sake no doubt, had put them aside with a laugh, and had asked him to stay to supper. He had been a lenient creditor, but now he was gone—dead a month or more.

And that fawning hypocrite had already shown his teeth in a notice of foreclosure!

The writing-table was sold. The bookcase followed quickly, and now old Hubbard, the retired solicitor, was taking a complete set of the *Art Journal* almost at his own price. The dead man had always been fond of books and things. He had paid him a visit, on that last day, in his bedroom. For some five minutes he had sat beside the man who was dead, yet alive, and who gazed at him all the time with such an intense and painful look. He had tried to speak to him but had failed, overcome by the pity of it. The sight of that awful helplessness and silence had been too much for him, and he had had to go. Three or four hours later he had heard of the end!

Ha! what was going on now? He sat forward, leaning upon his stick. The books had been sold, as well as all the heavier furniture, and now the smaller lots were being put up. The man had grouped two articles upon the table: the queer little bronze and the plain birch paper-rack.

'The last lot, ladies and gentlemen,' cried the auctioneer blandly, 'the last lot. A useful paper-rack, and a fine bronze head of—of, no doubt, some great celebrity.'

'Celebrity!' echoed a harsh voice in front. 'Celebrity! That is a head of Mr Christopher Colbeck.'

The general whispering ceased for an instant. It was old Hubbard who had spoken, and the strangeness of his interruption caused a sudden silence. And before the auctioneer could proceed the old gentleman spoke again. He was something of a local authority on art, and lost no opportunity of placing his rather mixed knowledge at the service of his fellow-men.

'It is a head of Christopher Colbeck, right enough. He travelled when he was young, and no doubt had this cast made abroad. It is a piece of Naples work—the likeness is as clear as possible!'

All eyes were immediately turned to the bronze head, and the likeness gradually became plain to those who had known the deceased well. The features were those of Christopher Colbeck as he might have looked when a young man, beardless and fresh, and free from the lines of toil and scheming.

A murmur of surprise and interest passed round the room. The incident seemed to unveil a new and unsuspected phase of the rich man's character.

But the auctioneer, seeing an opening, went on again.

'A fine paper-rack, ladies and gentlemen, and a splendid souvenir for friends of the deceased gentleman—a bronze head in Naples work. Shall I take your bids?'

Silence followed the question, and Mr Hubbard took a triumphant pinch of snuff. The late Mr

Colbeck had not been generally esteemed except for his business abilities, and no one seemed anxious to bid. Yet one old man, sitting alone in a corner, had been roused by the words, and was now fumbling with his purse.

'Come, ladies and gentlemen,' said the auctioneer persuasively. 'This is the last lot. Who makes a bid?'

'Half-a-guinea!' said a quavering voice which seemed almost afraid of itself.

'Half-a-guinea is bid!' cried the man of sales, rapping upon the table with his mallet. 'Come, ladies and gentlemen, who said one guinea?'

No one said one guinea. At the first bid people had nudged each other, directing curious glances into the corner. They knew John Fernley's circumstances pretty well, and knew also that he had been Colbeck's friend. So they did not care to stand in his way, and, as for the brokers, the head had no value for them, and they did not want it.

But at that moment there was a stir at the door, and Robert Heigham entered. Here was something of a sensation: the disappointed nephew appearing at the sale of those effects which might have been his, but which were being sold, instead, for the benefit of a charity. For everybody knew that he was disappointed. What value was the toilsome business, compared with the solid eighty thousand which had gone elsewhere?

'Half-a-guinea is bid for this last lot—Half-a-guinea!' cried the auctioneer once more. 'Is there no further bid, ladies and gentlemen? Half-a-guinea, then—this fine bronze head of Mr Christopher Colbeck. Half-a-guinea—Sold! Mr John Fernley?'

Those who happened to be near the door at that moment were surprised to see a strange movement on the part of Robert Heigham. It was a movement of the whole man, a sudden start, as though he had received a shock. They saw the colour fade from his face in an instant, leaving it a ghastly white.

'Sold!' echoed the auctioneer carelessly. 'Mr John Fernley?—Thank you, sir.'

'Two guineas—five—ten guineas! I bid ten guineas!'

Robert Heigham had made a step forward, and his voice, hoarse and husky at first, broke into something like a shriek at the last word. His hand was outstretched, and his face had purpled again with excitement.

'Ten guineas!' he shouted, in the intense silence which followed the outbreak. 'Do you hear? I offer ten guineas for that head!'

There was a general confusion, natural enough under such startling conditions. Heigham's flushed and working face, his agitated manner, and the strangeness of his words, all conduced to a sensation.

The auctioneer was the first to recover himself. He thought the young man was intoxicated, for he could see no other explanation of an incident so contrary to the traditions of an auction-room.

'Very sorry, sir,' he said suavely. 'This lot has been knocked down to Mr Fernley. If you wish to repurchase, perhaps you can arrange with him. We will now, ladies and gentlemen, proceed to the rooms upstairs.'

The scene was over. Heigham, apparently sobered by his failure, stood aside, sullenly watching the groups that passed him to the stairs. He recognised no one, and none of those present liked him sufficiently well to intrude upon his evidently unpleasant mood, except Mr Hubbard.

'Ten guineas, indeed!' said the old solicitor as he approached. 'Ten guineas! It was not worth it, my dear sir. You should not allow your affection for your uncle to carry you away like that!'

Heigham frowned angrily. He was watching John Fernley, who had stepped up to the table to receive and pay for his purchase, which he wrapped up tenderly in a newspaper. There was triumph in the old man's face. It was something to him to have given that young Heigham such a check.

The auctioneer's clerk moved to assist him. 'Mind, please,' said the purchaser, quickly. 'One part appears to be loose. Ah! I see, it screws on. There, that's right! Thank you.'

He settled the parcel under his arm, and prepared to go. But Heigham stepped forward and touched his shoulder.

'Mr Fernley!'

The old man turned, tightening his grasp upon his prize. Was this excited young fellow going to claim it?

'Mr Fernley,' said Robert Heigham, abruptly; 'I wish to buy that head. Mr Colbeck was my uncle and partner.'

A gleam of resentment appeared in John Fernley's eyes. 'Yes, your uncle,' he said bitterly, 'but he was my friend, sir! And I can tell you that he would never have sent me the letter you sent last week. Your uncle, indeed!'

'Pshaw! You mean the notice of foreclosure,' replied the other, with assumed carelessness. 'That was a matter of business, sir, and so is this; I offer you ten guineas for that head.'

The old man hesitated. Ten guineas was much to him, and perhaps he would have given way at once but for that contemptuous reference to the foreclosure. So it was only a matter of business to this young man that he and his children should lose their old home! The thought galled him, and increased his anger.

'Very well, sir,' he retorted. 'Since it is only a matter of business, you may have the head. But its price is eight hundred and fifty pounds! I bid you good afternoon!'

Smiling bitterly at his own jest he moved again to the door. There was a silence of astonishment behind him. The clerk surveyed the scene with wide-open eyes, and Hubbard paused in the act of taking down a volume of the *Art Journal*. Heigham stood motionless, trying to arrange his thoughts. What did this old man mean—what did he know? He had been with Christopher Colbeck on that last day. Was he in the secret, and was this his price? If he allowed that wretched bronze to leave his sight—Oh! how he cursed his own stupidity!

'Stop, Mr Fernley!' he cried, with a sudden effort. 'I will pay the price you name.'

Fernley stopped, incredulous; but Heigham, taking a blank cheque from his pocket-book, sat down at the table and rapidly filled it out.

'Here it is,' he said, calmly, as he rose and placed it in the old man's hand. 'It is drawn

upon my bank, and these gentlemen are witnesses to the transaction.'

Still incredulous, John Fernley took the slip. He gazed at it blankly, but at the same time allowed the parcel to leave the shelter of his arm. Heigham grasped it with ill-concealed eagerness.

And then the pedestal, which had been loose before, owing to the screw having been turned by careless handling, came away at his nervous clutch, fell off, and rolled, with a hollow sound, under the table. They gave it no attention, however, for a narrow, folded paper had fallen after it, and lay upon the floor at their feet.

The clerk stooped to pick it up, but Heigham anticipated him. Yet, quick as his movement was, they all had time to see the words of an endorsement, written in thick, black letters :

*Dated September . . . 1892.  
Last Will and Testament of*

\* \* \* \* \*

Some one spread the sheet upon the table, and they all read together to the bottom of the first closely-written page. Perhaps there was a little envy mingled with their surprise; but the man they envied was quite unaware of it. He was striving to control himself, yet in his ears the muttered words of old Mr Hubbard seemed to fall into a strange rhythm which he could not break : *Eighty thousand, Eighty thousand, Eighty thousand Pounds! Eighty thousand, Eighty thousand, Eighty thousand Pounds!* Oh, it was glorious! All the house property, all the sums invested in the Funds, all the interests in various companies—

*'to my said nephew and partner, Robert Heigham; save and except the following legacies, namely, A Sum of Five Hundred Pounds to my present housekeeper, Martha Carroll; also—'*

A pause there; they had reached the foot of the page. The foolscap rustled as Mr Hubbard turned it over. Then—

'Good heavens!' cried the solicitor. 'It is waste-paper—nothing more—waste-paper!'

For a moment they did not take his meaning, but the truth came quickly. The close, heavy handwriting of Christopher Colbeck ended half-way down that second page. He had drawn up the will one night in his study, probably at a late hour, when the servants had retired, and when there were no other persons available to witness his signature. So he had put it aside for a time, the bronze head with its peculiar screw pedestal forming a fantastic hiding-place. A few days later he had been stricken down, leaving it still unsigned.

Robert Heigham knew the rest. He stood looking fixedly upon the useless paper. The unfinished sheet mocked him, and he turned his glance aside. It fell upon the bronze head, lying almost at his elbow.

He had noticed it often in the past, standing upon the desk; but he had never thought, never dreamed what it really was. To him it had simply been a freak of his uncle's eccentric fancy, and he had never even troubled himself to ask a question about it. The auctioneer's careless words had opened his eyes, and he had perceived the whole strange truth at once. What a blind, blind fool he had been!

And as the disappointed man stared helplessly

at the bronze head, he seemed to see two dark eyes gazing steadily at him from the blank, expressionless face. They were living and eager, and their look was that intense look of painful triumph and exultation; that last look which he could not forget. But now he knew its meaning!

#### THE OLD-FASHIONED COLLIER.

Of the many picturesque details of our home matters none is more familiar than the collier. Along what stretch of the British seaboard, from John o' Groat's to the Land's End, may she not be viewed? What seacoast hamlet, whose foreshore, seen at high tide, is a dreary expanse of mud half-way to the horizon, but contains within its weedy little harbour the squalid old brig or schooner that came staggering in laden with coal down to her rusty chain-plate bolts? One must always think kindly of the collier. We all recognise her when we see her, whether she be lying moored alongside of a stretch of quay from which it is easy to get a peep at her grimy deck, crazy little caboose, queer-looking sailors with shovels in their hands, and the inevitable captain's dog barking up defiantly out of its sooty kennel; or whether she floats, a motionless object, upon the calm summer sea, her dark, bepatched sails faithfully mirrored in the water which brims in gleaming folds to her tarry bends. It needs no sailor's eye to tell that she will be the *Sally* of South Shields or the *Betsy* of Blyth or the *Mary Ann* of Sunderland. The nautical man will point out to you certain little details by which he can tell her, such as a stump topgallant-mast, a boom-foresail, or ill-stayed masts; but the general characteristics of the type are unmistakable to the veriest landsman.

The collier has always been reckoned one of the finest nurseries for seamen Great Britain possesses. In all weathers, and in all seasons, she is washing about the North Sea, or swirling along under her disreputable-looking canvas through the green waters of the English Channel. No pilot does the skipper want to tell him his whereabouts. A glance at the contour of the coast, or a cast of the lead when the land is out of sight, will enable him to say that down yonder lies such-and-such a place, and tell you as much about the run of the tides at that particular spot as the most complete volume of sailing directions. He may never have touched a sextant in his life, yet his 'dead reckoning' is unerring. One would not, indeed, say that the hardships of Collier Jack's life are greater than those of the deep-sea fisherman, but they are at least as great. His vessel may be bigger than the Doggerbank trawler, but it is seldom that she is so stout and staunchly built. He goes through quite as much weather, with this difference—that the obligation upon him to deliver his cargo as promptly as possible forces him to keep storming through the billows however hard it may blow, whilst the fisherman heaves his little ship to, and over-rides the seas like a duck till the storm subsides.

Was it not a North Country 'Geordie' all of the olden school that was coolly snuggling-down

and outweathering the fierce squall on that memorable Sunday when, within a mile of her, the *Eurydice*, with her ports yawning open and the crew at prayers, went down, all standing? Such a fact should be pretty significant testimony to the admirable seamanship of the race of men whose perilous labour gives us a glowing hearth in the winter-time. Captain Cook first went to sea as a boy on board of a collier, and there, he always declared, he learnt his business as a sailor. Although the propeller is fast taking the place of the grimy canvas there is still a very vast fleet of sailing colliers yet afloat, and the men who go to sea in them are the same hardy, skilled set of fellows they ever were. If you would learn what manner of man Collier Jack is, pause by the quayside of any busy seaport, and it is ten to one if the very first vessel abreast of which you halt will not be a coal-ship. Watch the little crew of black-faced men whipping up baskets full of coal from out the darksome hold, chatting and laughing as they rattle the handles of the winch; with perhaps a glimpse of those working below, when they step under the open hatches and gaze up, their teeth and the whites of their eyes glistening like negroes'. It is a hard life. When at sea the collier sailor undergoes all the hardships and dangers and does all the work of a merchant seaman; and when he is in port he is seldom without a shovel in his hands.

Among the vessels themselves there are many quaint specimens of maritime architecture to be encountered. The collier seems to have many lives. She grows old and crazy; but still her creaking hull goes on washing about from port to port, and a periodical spell at the ancient pumps suffices to keep under the drainings through her starting seams. The writer once knew a collier named the *Rye Merchant*, built at the port of the Rye in the year of Waterloo. Her burthen was eighty tons, and her rig was that of a snow, though she was subsequently converted into a schooner. This venerable vessel was reputed to have been ashore upon every shoal and sand off the coast of Britain between the North Foreland and the Tyne. It became a kind of tradition that the *Rye Merchant* had a charmed life, like the *Flying Dutchman*. The sooty little craft usually arrived at her destination in the very heart of a storm. Eventually she was lost off Ramsgate in a hurricane of wind, but it took the raging sea many hours to demolish her staunch timbers.

Here is a description of this same *Rye Merchant*, which may likewise stand for a very truthful picture of the typical collier: 'She had been built,' runs the account, 'for the coal trade, and had never carried any other cargo than coal from the day she was launched. Had her skipper told me her age was a hundred years I should have believed him. I never before remembered seeing so ugly a hull. Her bows were shaped like an apple; and what counter she had was a long way under water, so that when loaded her stern looked up and down as though it had been sawn off. Her deck resembled the lid of an egg-box; she was steered by a long tiller that brought the man who held it close against the companion, and the head of the rudder worked in a hole big

enough to ship the mainmast in. She had only one boat, and that she carried keel up on the main hatch, and under it and all around it was a whole muddle of short spars, fenders, coils of rope, with several tolerably big piles of coals, the surplus of the freight for which no room could be found in the hold. But the oddest part of the show was aloft. She had short topgallant-masts, and, the wind being northerly, all sail had been made upon her. Only a sailor could thoroughly appreciate the grotesqueness of canvas, patched with half-a-dozen colours, as though the sailmaker had raked over the stores of a rag and bottle merchant for the materials to make this coalman a suit.'

One may guess how little, within the present century at all events, the sailing collier has changed by harking back to the pictures of E. W. Cook, R.A., published in 1827. There we see the old schooner, or brig, or ketch precisely as she exists to-day. In one of these drawings the famous marine artist shows us the way of discharging the cargo by 'jumping,' then universally employed, and still very much in vogue. It is an operation which requires a great deal of skill, and greenhorns to it get many awkward tumbles. A rope is rove through a block at the end of a derrick, one end of which is attached to a large basket: at the other end are four whip-lines. A very broad, ladder-shaped structure, for all the world like a five-barred gate, is placed against the edge of the open hatch. Four men, grasping the whip-lines, ascend this ladder, the basket sinking into the hold as the rope overhauls itself. When the basket is filled the men below utter a cry, and simultaneously the four men spring backwards on to the deck, a distance of several feet. The weight of their bodies runs the basket up clear of the hatch-covering, where a man in attendance dexterously tips its contents into the weighing-machine. By this process a vessel may be discharged with extraordinary rapidity; but one must be sorry for the limbs of the sailors at the end of the day's work.

In the rig of his vessel the collierman is extremely conservative. He chiefly favours the brigantine, and certainly no handier class of ship sails the seas. The 'butter-rigged' schooner is another very familiar type. The etymology of this expression, 'butter-rigged,' is interesting. It is a term applied by sailors to schooners which, instead of carrying a standing topgallant-yard, set the topgallant-sail 'flying.' There is nothing suggestive of butter about this trifling peculiarity of rig. But it seems that the fashion was originally introduced by the smart little schooners trading to Normandy for butter, and hence this species of vessel came to be called 'butter-rigged.' The brig is another common type of collier, but she appears to be declining. Her double set of square yards require more hands to work them than either of the foregoing rigs; and in point of weatherliness and speed she is not equal to the schooner or the brigantine. Other types there are, but they are chiefly local, such as the Goole 'billy-boy,' the ketch, and the nearly-extinct hoy.

The first steam-collier was built in 1844. She was a queer-looking old iron craft of two hundred and seventy-two tons, heavily barque-

rigged, with a double bottom. She was one of the very earliest vessels to be fitted with wire-rope shrouds. Her name was the *Q. E. D.*, but she did not fulfil the expectations with which her owners thus christened her. The *Q. E. D.* was a failure. She was an auxiliary craft, and whilst the under-powered engines were of small use to drive her against any wind, she was likewise a poor sailer. There are, at the present day, very many steam-colliers afloat, but they are chiefly employed in foreign trade. It is safe to predict that in the coasting trade the steamboat will never supersede the sailing-ship. She is so much more costly to build and maintain, and the advantages of her employment in this particular traffic would be so few that we need not anticipate having to deplore the disappearance of yet another picturesque detail out of the life of the sea.

The collier sailor has not contributed very considerably to English literature, yet one of the most entertaining little volumes of nautical memoirs ever put together is the autobiography of Henry Taylor, master mariner of South Shields, who was born in 1737, and published the account of his life in 1811. The book is scarce, and is a real curiosity in its way, presenting as it does a very perfect picture of life on board a collier in the last century. In reading it one cannot fail to be impressed by the very small degree of change which has taken place in the essentials of the mariner's calling. Modernise Taylor's quaint old forms of expression, and his book would very truthfully represent the life on board a 'Geordlieman' of to-day. Probably no sailor ever lived whose memory has greater claims upon the gratitude of all seafaring men than that of old Henry Taylor. For he it was who first brought about the beaconing of dangerous shoals and reefs by means of lightships. Like most sailors, when he quitted the sea he left his heart behind him, and in the seclusion of a somewhat poverty-stricken retirement conceived the idea of beaconing the watery highways round our coasts. His scheme was adopted, and the old North Country collier master lived to see a splendid system of floating beacons established. The poor fellow's appeal to the Trinity House for some recognition of his scheme is almost pathetic. 'Many years,' he writes, 'after I had settled on shore I had to struggle with embarrassing circumstances, which, not without difficulty, I weathered through. My heart was always too big for my means; for, however I might be oppressed with poverty, I could not resist the propensity of contributing as much as was in my power to the happiness of my fellow-creatures, especially seamen, for whom I always had a partial regard; and hence I was always ready to join in any measures calculated for their benefit.' And then he goes on to state his claims as a man who practically invented the lightship. But the obscure Shields collier skipper had a hard fight; and it was not until long after the light he had been instrumental in placing had been bravely burning through many seasons of stormy darkness that Taylor obtained a grant of five hundred pounds from the Trinity House.

This, however, is a trifling digression, although it is quite in keeping that the name of Henry

Taylor should be associated with any account of the old-fashioned collier.

One gets a first-rate idea of Jack Coalman's quarters and manner of living from an account that is included in a volume of reprints entitled *My Watch Below*. Writing from the personal experience of a trip in a 'waist,' the author says: 'As in the forecastle, so in the cabin, the one permanent, haunting sense was coal-dust. It got into one's eyes, nose, and ears like a fly; it gave a cellar-like flavour to the beef, it darkened the hue of the currant-dumplings, it lurked in the mustard-pot, and was visible in floating particles in the rum. Its presence, however, was not very difficult to account for, seeing that two hundred and fifty tons of coal in the hold came flush with the deck under our feet, and were piled against the ancient and liberally-creviced bulkhead which separated our cabin from the vessel's freight. This same cabin was a gloomy little abode, and consisted of a small stove near the companion steps, a table surrounded with lockers which served as seats, and four cabins partitioned off and entered by small doors. There was a rude skylight overhead that let down light enough through its dark windows to enable us to see what we were eating. The captain's berth fronted the stove, mine was opposite the table on the port-side, and the mate's faced mine. The man at the helm was considered a sufficient lookout whilst dinner was going forward; and I have no doubt that the skipper and the mate and I made a very picturesque group as we sat round the beef and dumplings at the little table. My friends had immense appetites, and spoke only in monosyllables whilst they ate; they merely removed their eyes from their plates to glance through the skylight at the weather and at the mizzen that was stretched overhead. I fancied from the quantity of mustard they took with their beef that they were getting to lose their relish for coal-dust. But for this predominating oily flavour I am bound to admit that the provisions would have been excellent. The corned beef was exceedingly tender and cooked to a turn, the potatoes might have been boiled by Benjamin Brail's mother. I declined the offer of a dumpling very nearly as big as a seven-pound round-shot; but from the way in which these duffs were torn open and eaten up by the skipper and the mate I should say that of their kind they were by no means a bad pudding.'

In the matter of his food, the collierman undoubtedly has a very great pull over the deep-water sailor. His voyages are chiefly short coast trips, which enable him to feed upon fresh meat and bakers' bread. Still, taking it all round, his lot is not an easy one. Superadded to the ordinary perils of the sea he has many inconveniences of a very disagreeable kind to put up with. In the *History of Merchant Shipping*, which was written by a ship-owner who naturally did not take a very favourable view of forecastle Jack, there is a high tribute to the collier sailor. 'Perhaps,' says Mr Lindsay, 'no branch of maritime commerce ever produced harder or more alert seamen than that of the northern coal-trade. During her great naval engagements England looked to that

trade more than to any other for the best, or at least the hardiest and most daring seamen for her navy. Indeed, it afforded a supply of men who would go aloft in any weather, and fight the guns with the green sea frequently rolling through the portholes. They never saw danger. Accustomed to work their way amongst shoals and sandbanks and along ironbound coasts in their frail craft, and during the most tempestuous weather, the shelter of a man-of-war was like a haven of rest to them. But though they frequently faced dangers without a thought which would have made the regular man-of-war tremble, they stood sadly in want of discipline, and were with great difficulty trained to order, so that the comparatively easy life of a man-of-war had few attractions for them. On board of the collier, master, mate, and men smoked their pipes together; and if they did not mess from the same kid they were in all other respects pretty much alike, creating an equality and freedom more in accordance with their habits and tastes than the drill and daily routine of the Royal Navy.'

#### ELECTRICITY FROM THE DUST-BINS.

EVERY industry has an unavoidable percentage of waste, and to find a use for this refuse is a distinctive feature of the age, and a problem which has in many instances been most happily solved. The most common industry of all—household management—has its ash-pit or dust-bin for the necessary amount of waste products which must accrue under the most skilful and economical rule. But whereas in ordinary manufactures the refuse has been turned very often to profitable account, the product of the household dust-bin has long been a drug in the market.

This was not always so, for there was a time when contractors would not only compete for the work of collecting and carting away the household refuse of a parish, but would pay a handsome bonus for the privilege of doing so; and as contractors are not in the habit of purchasing stuff which will bring them no profit, we may feel quite sure that at the time we speak of—some thirty years ago—the contents of the dust-bins represented a valuable asset. This value naturally varied with locality, and it will simplify matters if we confine our attention to London only. We find that in the year 1867 the parish of St Pancras received from its dust contractor a sum of fifteen hundred and twenty-five pounds as payment for the refuse carted away. In 1893 the same vestry paid more than as many thousands to have their dust-bins cleared. We fancy that any man of business would be somewhat appalled if in the course of such a short time he found a valuable income not only transferred to the wrong side of his ledger, but multiplied by ten into the bargain. He would at any rate lose no time in inquiring into the cause of this vast stride from profit to loss, and this is what we must now do with regard to the London dust account.

Thirty years ago suburban London was in course of formation; pleasant pastures were being turned into streets, and buttercups and daisies were giving place to macadam. The speculative

builder was at work, and the builder can no more build without bricks than bricks can be made without straw. At that date, too, no one thought of making bricks without mixing up with the clay a large proportion of house dust, while the dust-bins also contributed to the manufacture by furnishing the cinders and morsels of coal—technically called 'breeze'—which fired the bricks in the clamps. At one time, it is said, brick-makers were paying the dust contractors no less than a sovereign per chaldron for this dust and ashes—the market price gradually settling down to twelve shillings. Now, however, the demand has ceased. In the first place, the growth of London has naturally increased the supply of refuse to an enormous extent; and in the second place, the brickfields are now pushed out of reach far away on the outskirts of greater London. Moreover, the very nature of the bricks has been changed, and they are now made independently of 'breeze.' It is thus not difficult to understand how a source of parish income has been turned into an item of heavy cost.

As an extinct industry the work of the dust contractor is not without interest, and at first sight it would seem to represent an admirable way of dealing with a somewhat difficult problem. The noisome mixture which is politely called 'dust' was taken in the carts to the contractor's yard, and there sorted. This rough and filthy work was performed by women, who might have been seen standing nearly waist-high in the evil-smelling refuse, one with a shovel, another with a sieve, and with innumerable baskets around them. The dust and ash went through the meshes of the sieve, but the bones, rags, bits of paper, glass, crockery, &c. were picked out by hand, and each thrown into its own basket. Such treasure-trove as coins—few and far between—these humble workers were allowed to keep as perquisites, and in view of such an occasional prize, the sifting, we may be sure, was thoroughly done. The rags found their way to the paper-maker, the bones to the soap-boiler and chemical-works, the glass to the bottlemakers; broken crockery went to roadmaking, tin canisters to a factory where the solder was recovered from them, old iron to the northern furnaces; offal and vegetable refuse, to which was added that from the adjacent markets, to manure the fields. In this way every item was turned to account, except about one-tenth of the whole—a residue of no use whatever, which was burnt in a corner of the yard.

Now, however, that the demand for the 'breeze' has ceased, the industry is no longer profitable. The vestry pays so much a ton for having the refuse taken away, and it is generally loaded into barges—taken out to sea and 'drowned.' A far more objectionable plan is to shoot it upon waste land, where in time villa residences will be built above it. The contractor's yard can no more be permitted to exist, even if the industry were still a remunerative one; for the sanitary officer would very properly condemn it as a nuisance dangerous to health.

The growing cost of dealing with this refuse from our houses induced some of the vestries, about fifteen years ago, to adopt the 'destructive system,' a destructor being a special form of furnace in which the stuff can be rapidly burnt

and at any rate rendered innocuous, and this example has since been widely followed. It was found a cheaper plan to destroy the stuff in this way than to pay others to take it away ; while at the same time the risk to health in conveying decaying animal and vegetable matter from place to place was altogether avoided. Thus the disposal of the household refuse of London entered upon a new phase, and for the moment it seemed to be a subject which was satisfactorily solved.

In the meantime the science of electricity had made enormous strides. Towns and cities were being lighted by the current, tramways and railways were being actuated by the same mysterious force, and it seemed as if a new and beneficent power had been conferred upon mankind. The works at Niagara and at many minor waterfalls had taught 'the man in the street' who knew nothing of electrical phenomena, that by the aid of this wonderful force the work or energy developed at one spot could be transferred by wires to a distant one, and there turned once more into motion or into light.

Then it was that the 'destructor' makers formed an alliance with the electricians. They pointed out how, in the burning of all that parish débris, a vast amount of heat was developed and was allowed to run to waste—to escape by the long chimney-shaft into the atmosphere. Could not some of that heat be utilised in raising steam for the working of electric dynamo machines ? and if so, could not the current so evoked be utilised for lighting the parish lamps ?

This bold question, so fascinating in the prospects which it afforded, was submitted to experts and answered in the affirmative. St Pancras vestry—which had already elected to keep the lighting monopoly in their own hands, and had refused to admit any electric company within their boundaries—determined to put the important matter to practical test, and eighteen months ago a dust destructor plant of the newest design, coupled with an electrical generating station, commenced operations.

In outward appearance this twofold establishment looks like a big factory, and any one not acquainted with its mission would be apt to wonder at the procession of loaded dust-carts which are continually going in at one gate and coming out empty at another. These carts discharge their unsavoury contents into huge troughs, from which the mass gravitates into hoppers and then into the furnaces. The hoppers are provided with rocking-bars, by the motion of which the refuse is constantly fed forward into the fires. These rockers are worked by a steam-engine, which has also the duty of keeping up a forced draught through the furnaces, without which it would be impossible to burn the rubbish, a large portion of which is of a not very inflammable nature. Indeed, a certain proportion of coal has to be employed to coax it to burn. The refuse is burnt in its entirety, with the exception of the pots, kettles, and ironware, which, if allowed to pass, would clog the mechanism. These are stored away, and ultimately shipped to Barrow, in Lancashire, where they are melted down and commence a new career.

At a lower level are the furnaces, which are being continually cleared of the ash and clinker

which rapidly accumulates, and which represents all that remains of the evil-smelling refuse cast into the troughs above a few hours before. Even if no further good were done than the reduction of this noxious matter to such a harmless form, the enterprise would be a useful one ; but, as we have seen, the ratepayers hope in time to reap a profit from the establishment. Even this clinker is not a waste product, for it is ground up in mills on the premises, and when mixed with lime forms an excellent concrete and mortar, which are used for parish work. Between eighty and one hundred tons of refuse are being thus disposed of daily, the heat from the furnaces being carried next door for the service, as already indicated, of the electrical department. So much for this pioneer attempt to turn dirt and darkness into light.

Eighteen months' experience has suggested many improvements in the system ; and the Shoreditch vestry, which has recently opened similar works on a far more extensive scale, has been able to profit by what it has seen at St Pancras. Shoreditch had for some time been paying a contractor three shillings and three-pence per ton for carting away its household refuse. It now disposes of this refuse in its own crematorium, and gains two shillings per ton on the transaction. A simple calculation will show that, supposing only eighty tons of refuse per diem are treated, there is a net gain here of close upon three thousand pounds a year. The chief improvements in this system over that adopted by the St Pancras vestry—and the writer has carefully examined both—seem to be the use of tubular boilers instead of those of the Lancashire type, and the provision of a system of heat storage by which much waste is avoided.

The importance of this latter provision will be recognised when it is remembered that the burning of refuse is necessarily a continuous operation. Carts full are arriving every minute, and their contents go to the furnaces without delay ; hence steam is being raised in the boilers in the daylight hours, while it is actually far more in request later on, when the electric machinery is at work lighting up the parish lamps. Instead of this steam being wasted it goes into what is called a thermal storage cylinder, where it meets a certain quantity of cold water from the feed-pumps, which it heats. This cylinder is thirty-five feet long, and has a diameter of eight feet ; and by the evening of each day it is full of water at the temperature and pressure required by the engines.

The parish of Shoreditch is one of the most compact in London, and at the same time a most thickly populated one, covering as it does one square mile, and affording house accommodation for no fewer than 124,000 persons. It was a tempting field, upon which any electric lighting company would have delighted to work its own sweet will. But, following the advice of St Pancras, Shoreditch determined to keep the lighting monopoly in their own hands ; and, as we have seen, they have combined the business with the disposal of the parish refuse. They are now enabled to offer the parishioners light on the penny-in-the-slot principle—six hours' light from an eight-candle-power lamp for one penny—without anything to pay for fittings.

This is indeed a boon in a parish where the majority of dwellers are working men and women; for Shoreditch is the seat of the furniture industry, and nearly every home is a small factory.

In addition to this the vestry will supply current in the daytime for working small machines at the very cheap rate of twopence per Board of Trade unit. This works out much cheaper than gas for such purposes, and will, no doubt, be largely taken advantage of in a district where woodworking machinery is such a labour-saver.

In connection with this vast undertaking, which has cost £70,000, are baths and wash-houses, which will receive their heat from the dust destructor, a public library, and a Technical Institute and Museum. It will thus be seen that the parish of Shoreditch is doing much to improve the well-being of its inhabitants; but the part of the scheme which will attract the most attention, and which will be watched with the greatest interest, is the endeavour to provide beautiful light from the noisome contents of the household dust-bins.

#### THE COLONIES OF GERMANY.

THERE are fashions in international as in social affairs, and the fashion of our century is the making of colonies. The three great nations of Europe—Britain, France, and Germany—are each and all engaged in the work of building up a colonial empire. We flatter ourselves, of course, that neither of our neighbours is as well up to the business as we are, and certainly France has not made a brilliant success in Tongking nor Germany in Africa. But Germany is going about her colonial enterprises with so much earnestness and characteristic perseverance that it becomes the average Briton to know something more about these enterprises than is to be gathered from casual reading of the newspapers. They have not yet proved, nor seem likely to prove, such successes in colonial expansion as we have achieved in almost every direction; but they are notable and interesting developments of both direct and indirect bearing on our own colonial empire.

Strictly speaking, in the official sense, Germany has no colonies. She has certain external possessions which are technically classified as 'Schutzgebiete' (Protectorates) and 'Interessen-sphären' (Spheres of Interest), but 'Kolonie' is a word unknown in the official vocabulary, frequently as it is used otherwise. Since the international delimitation of frontiers, the 'Interessen-sphären' are seldom mentioned, and 'Schutzgebiet' is the most general term in official use. The colonial policy, however, is both official and national, and several organisations exist for the promotion of it. There is, for instance, the Kolonial-Abtheilung, or Colonial Department of the Foreign Office, under the immediate control of the Imperial Chancellor. There is the Kolonial Rath (or Council) composed of members representative of the commercial and other interests of all parts of Germany, who meet to discuss the Colonial Budgets, communications,

railway extension, emigration, and the like; and there are throughout the empire a number of colonial societies (affiliated to the Deutsche Kolonial-Gesellschaft in Berlin), whose object is to assist the work of colonisation, promote and regulate emigration, develop connections, and so forth. Then there is a society or central union for commercial geography, whose object is educative; there are two great African missionary associations, Catholic and Protestant; and there are several companies specially endowed for enterprises in or connected with the German Colonies in Africa and the Pacific. All these organisations are the product of little more than twelve years, for it was in April 1884 that Prince Bismarck announced that a German Protectorate had been formed in the region round Angra Pequena. Later in the same year Dr Nachtigal founded the German Protectorate of Togoland and Cameroons, and the German 'Sphere' in East Africa took shape; while in 1885 the German flag was hoisted in New Guinea and in 1886 in the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific. In these two years the territory added to the German Empire amounted to five times the area of the Fatherland itself. That the results of this territorial expansion have not come up to German hopes and expectations is not to be denied; but that is not surprising, for Germany had had no previous experience in colonisation since the Brandenburgers, some two hundred years ago, formed a settlement on the Gold Coast—which they had afterwards to abandon.

The beginning of the German Colonies in Africa was this: In 1882 a Bremen merchant, named Lüderitz, set up a 'factory' on the West African coast, just north of the Orange River. The Cape Colonists did not like this, for they had always fancied the Orange River for themselves, and wanted to have the territory included in Cape Colony. They were too late, however, for Lüderitz sent home such glowing reports on the advantages and prospective value of the country that the German flag was ordered to be run up in the bay of Angra Pequena. Thus was annexed the region known as Lüderitzland, which was included in the German Protectorate proclaimed in 1884. This Schutzgebiet of German South-west Africa now comprises an area of 835,100 square kilometres, and a total white population of about 2000 (2025 on 1st January 1896), of whom barely 1000 are Germans, and the rest British subjects and Boers. Of 780 adult male Germans, no fewer than 586 are officials and constabulary. The administration is in the hands of a 'Kaiserlicher-Landeshauptmann,' assisted by a vice-governor, a secretary, and two district administrators. In the last official report it was complained that German immigration in South-west Africa proceeds very slowly, and that very few German farmers have arrived. Yet the country is supposed to possess great capabilities for cattle-raising. The importation of German goods, however, has largely increased since the Colonial Society succeeded in establishing direct sea-communication between Hamburg and South-west Africa. The imports are now valued at £95,000, and the exports (hides, gum, ostrich feathers, and kernels) at £6200 per annum. The German South-west African Company have done a good deal in forming a harbour, and in

promoting immigration, and an English company has begun to work lead and copper mines, which are said to promise well; while other companies and syndicates, both German and British, are prospecting and exploring in Damaraland and Namaqualand and in digging guano in the district of Cape Cross. But the colony has not as yet been a success, and is very far from self-supporting. It yields, indeed, a revenue of only £6800 towards an expenditure which in 1895 rose to £223,650 in consequence of a rising of the Hottentots. All the rest is furnished out of the Imperial exchequer. This, to British ideas, is poor sort of colonisation.

One finds, however, a better state of affairs financially in Togoland, the second of Germany's colonial undertakings, annexed by Dr Nachtigal in 1884. This Schutzgebiet, or colony, is on the Slave Coast of the Gulf of Guinea, between the French Colony of Dahomey and the British Colony of the Gold Coast. It comprises an area of 60,000 square kilometres, native population of about two or two and a-half millions, and a European population of 96, of which 70 adult males are Germans (22 officials, 26 traders, and 22 missionaries). Though the smallest, Togoland is the most prosperous of the German-African dependencies. It grows coffee, and the chief products and exports are palm oil, palm nuts, cocoanuts, ground nuts, gum, and ebony. In 1894 the exports were valued at £144,700, and the imports at £112,000. There are some twenty-four trading factories; there is steam and telegraphic connection with Europe; and the government are industriously making roads, planting trees, and making experiments in agriculture, establishing schools, &c. Togoland is governed by an Imperial Administrator (Kaiserlicher-Landeshauptmann), with a suitable staff, and is the only one of the German Colonies that has yet paid its own way, and manages without Imperial financial aid. The expenditure of the colony is about £19,000 per annum (including the salaries of officials), and this is entirely provided by the customs duties and other taxes.

Another of Dr Nachtigal's additions to the German Empire is to the south-east of Togoland across the Gulf of Guinea. This is the Cameroons, or, as the Germans spell it, Kamerun, where, forty years before the Germans set eyes on it, the English Baptist missionaries had an important station, and a Glasgow merchant had established the foundation of what he intended to be a sanatorium for the European traders in West Africa. Back from the coast, up the slopes of the Cameroons Mountains, almost any temperature can be obtained, and at a certain height the climate is salubrious and invigorating. But in this desirable spot Prince Bismarck, on the recommendation of Dr Nachtigal, determined to establish a German Protectorate. The Imperial Eagle was hoisted, and the Baptist mission at Victoria—a sort of semi-republic—was bought up for the sum of £4000. Since then the Germans have expended a great deal of energy and much money in developing the Cameroons (we retain the more familiar name), although the results are not very great. The area of the colony is now, after rearrangement of the frontiers, officially stated at 495,000 square kilometres, and the white population is only 230, of which about

one-half are Germans. This is, perhaps, the most desirable of all the German colonial possessions; for while the coast region is unhealthy for Europeans it is remarkably rich, and a cool, elevated, grassy tableland is within easy distance, backed by a high mountain-range rising to a height of 10,000 feet. There are three towns—Kamerun, the seat of the government; Victoria, the centre of the Protestant missions, and of two of the trading companies; and Kribi, the centre of the Catholic missions, and also a place of trade. Victoria is celebrated for a large Botanical Garden which was founded by Baron Von Soden, the first governor, in which extensive agricultural and arboricultural experiments are conducted. European vegetables grow well even at Kamerun, and the Arabian coffee plant, the clove, and ginger trees have been found to flourish. The trade is in the hands of eight British and six or seven German firms or companies. The imports were to the value of £316,260 and the exports £204,000 in 1895, the latter consisting of palm-oil, palm-kernels, indiarubber, ebony, ivory, cocoa, coffee, and tobacco. Much has been done in the way of road-making, and Kamerun is now united by telegraph with Bonny in the British Protectorate of the Niger Coast. Cameroons may almost be called the pet colony of Germany, yet it is not self-supporting, and an Imperial grant of £34,000 was needed last year to square the expenditure.

To reach the next colony of Germany we have to go round the Cape of Good Hope, since there is not as yet a practicable route across the Dark Continent; but the nearer way to German East Africa is by way of the Red Sea and Zanzibar. This Schutzgebiet is the largest of the German colonial territories, being officially stated at 995,000 square kilometres. It was in 1884 that the first steps towards annexation were taken by Dr Carl Peters, whose name has figured prominently (and not always pleasantly) in modern African history: but it was not until 1890 that the German 'sphere' was delimited by international agreement. Roughly speaking, it is bounded on the north by British East Africa, on the west by Lakes Tanganyika and Nyassa, on the south by the river Koruma, and on the east by 360 miles of the Indian Ocean.

The native population is probably about three millions, but the Europeans do not number more than six hundred, of which about one-half are civil and military officials. Upwards of one third of the whites are resident at Dar-es-Salaam, the seat of the colonial administration and of the government workshops and stores. Bagamoyo, which will be remembered in connection with the tragic fate of Emin Pasha, is the chief port; from which there is a cable to Zanzibar, connecting with the European cable, and a regular line of steamers subsidised by the government to Hamburg. A railway is in course of construction towards the Victoria Nyanza, and this, along with the Mombasa railway which is being built by the British Government, ought to do more to destroy the slave-trade than all the cruisers that have hunted and pursued the Arab dhows. For governing purposes, German East Africa is divided into eight judicial and twelve administrative districts, with a governor, lieutenant-governor, imperial commissioners, and various other officials. It

involves a very heavy charge on the Imperial exchequer. In 1895, for instance, the expenses of government and development were £302,700, whilst the revenue from customs and all other sources was only £80,000, so that £222,700 had to be made up by the Imperial Government. This grant-in-aid seems to increase every year, which means that East Africa is becoming more and more of a dead-loss to Germany. Nor can the loss to the state be said to be compensated by the gain to German commerce, for the entire exports and imports barely exceed half-a-million sterling, and only £125,000 of that was in 1895 with Hamburg, nearly all the rest going through Zanzibar. Cattle-rearing has been introduced, but not with much success. Cocoa-nut, indiarubber, vanilla, and coffee plantations have been established, and the reports of them are officially declared to be satisfactory. Tobacco also has been tried, but the quality was found not up to the mark. Cotton thrives, but does not pay to grow at present prices in competition with India. Most of the trade is in the hands of the German East Africa Company. The late governor, Baron Von Schele, was of opinion that enough attention has been paid to the development of the lowlands, and that it is really to the hilly uplands of the interior that Germany must look for returns, as there, he says, is to be found a large area well suited for German agricultural settlers. But as the colonial administrators seem to be in constant hot-water with the native tribes there does not yet seem much encouragement for peaceful, practical colonists.

We follow now the German flag from Africa to the Pacific, where in 1885 Prince Bismarck astonished the world by hoisting it in New Guinea just after the British Government had ordered the governor of Thursday Island to haul down the Union Jack at Port-Moresby. Then followed the partition of New Guinea between Holland, Great Britain, and Germany. The portion ceded to Germany covers 181,500 square kilometres, and was re-named Kaiser Wilhelmsland. To it were annexed certain Papuan islands, now called the Bismarck Archipelago, and four islands of the Solomon group, adding further 250,000 square kilometres to the Colonial Empire. Originally, Kaiser Wilhelmsland was administered by the New Guinea Company, which paid all the officials appointed by the government, and enjoyed sovereign and juridical rights under Imperial charters. But this arrangement has not worked well, and the white settlers strongly objected to being 'bossed' by a company which was at the same time a rival in trade. Last year, therefore, an agreement was entered into by which the company should surrender all its sovereign rights and hand over the administration of the colony to the Imperial Government, who will henceforward provide and pay all the officials and maintain a police force and a man-of-war to preserve order. Thanks to the cost of administration, the German New Guinea Company has never paid a dividend, nor has the Astrolabe Company, which has been chiefly engaged in tobacco and cotton planting. To both these companies are reserved certain trading rights, privileges, and exemptions for a term of years, in return for their work as pioneers. It is estimated that the administration of Kaiser Wilhelmsland will cost the Imperial Government about £10,000 a-year more than

the revenue yielded by the colony, so that it cannot be said to have justified Bismarck's eagerness to possess it.

But Bismarck was always interested in the Pacific through his old schoolfellows and friends, the Godeffroy Brothers, who for many years monopolised most of the island trade. He made another acquisition in 1886 by adding the Marshall Islands to the Colonial Empire. This group has an area of 400 square kilometres, and a population of about eighty whites, who lead a very monotonous and dreary existence. The natives, like most of the Pacific Islanders, are nomadic, and therefore the population is fluctuating, but is probably never at any time more than 15,000. The staple product is copra, the dried kernel of the coconut, which is sent to Sydney or to Europe to have the oil expressed from it. The bulk of the trade is in the hands of the (German) Jaluit Company, which has also agencies in the Caroline and Gilbert groups. Steam communication exists with Sydney, but only about twice a year.

Such, then, are the German Colonies, and such their present condition. They are not a brilliant collection, and overhead they cost the Fatherland half-a-million sterling per annum for upkeep. From the point of view of Imperial finance, they are not profitable, and for this reason there are to be found in Germany energetic opponents of the colonial policy. But it is maintained that if these colonies cannot be reasonably expected to absorb much of the surplus population of the Fatherland they can and will become great centres of German trade, and German influence. It is certainly the fact that the name of Germany is now a power in remote regions where, a few years ago, it was absolutely unknown.

#### A TRIAD.

In the dreary forest arches leaves of gold and bronze are falling,  
Blackened grasses sigh where foam-like waves of meadow-sweet once lay.  
In theumbered beechen branches culvers plaintively are calling,  
And the hills in mists are shrouded that were once with heather gay.  
  
And the brook that sang in shadow and danced in the sunlight gaily  
Moves along in sullen silence, larks no more sing overhead.  
And the last, pale, tearful roses on their stalks are drooping daily,  
And a requiem the robins chant above the lilies dead.  
  
Erstwhile sky-reflecting violets in their sepulchres are lying  
'Neath the bracken and the willow and the dark-clad briony.  
Through the rushes and the sedges chilly winds are sadly sighing,  
For the summer and the swallows and my love are o'er the sea.

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